SAFETY ADVISORY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Safety Advisory and Transportation Committee Meeting was held on January 30, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. with Chairman Hutchison presiding. Members present were Mr. Perza (arrived at 5:14 p.m. and departed at 5:47 p.m.), Mr. Davis, and Mr. Keller.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mr. Hutchison moved to amend the agenda to allow for consideration of Item #2 prior to Item #1, seconded by Mr. Keller and unanimously carried.

Safety Concerns - New Dover High School Pedestrian/Vehicular Traffic

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, reminded members that staff had provided the Committee with regular updates regarding the progress of the construction of the new Dover High School, and during the last update staff stated that they believed strongly that a traffic signal was necessary at the east entrance of the school site. Mrs. Townshend explained that the east entrance was directly across the street from a number of residential developments where bus service will not be provided. She stated that without a traffic signal there is no safe way for students who walk to cross Route 8. Per Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) requirements, a warrant analysis was performed; however, the results did not support a signal at that location, thus DelDOT would not allow installation. Mrs. Townshend stated that a traffic signal had been proposed and approved by DelDOT at the west entrance of the school; however, she felt it unlikely that students coming from the east would walk an extra quarter of a mile to cross at the signal on the west side. In addition, she added that the unsafe walking conditions would likely result in more parents driving students to school, which would create more traffic on an already heavily traveled road. Mrs. Townshend noted that the new Dover High School would be a heavily utilized community facility throughout the day; therefore, a crossing guard would not be an option.

Mrs. Townshend noted that these concerns had been discussed previously at the Committee and Council levels and the consensus was that not allowing for a signal at the east entrance of the school was unacceptable and unsafe; however, DelDOT refused to put up the signal based on their study. She reminded members that the Committee had also recommended that sidewalks be constructed along the north side of Route 8 to fill the gaps in the sidewalk network; however, DelDOT responded that this would have to be included in the Capital Transportation Plan, which involves other funding priorities. Noting that the new Dover High School was scheduled to open in the Fall of 2014, Mrs. Townshend reminded members that the Committee had requested representatives from the Capital School District to be present at the meeting to engage in dialogue regarding how the City could work together with the District to have a signal placed at the east entrance.

Responding to Mr. Davis regarding the posting of a 15 mph speed limit restriction near the school, Mr. Koenig was unsure if the speed limit in school zones was restricted to 15 or 20 mph; however, he felt that this may depend on the type of school.

In response to Mr. Davis, Mrs. Townshend explained that locating a signal at the entrance of the school was not a cost issue, since she believed that the Capital School District would construct it as part of the project; however, DelDOT would not permit this signal on the road.

Mr. Hutchison called upon Dr. Michael Thomas, Superintendent of the Capital School District, for his perspective on this issue. Dr. Thomas introduced Mr. Phil Martino, Vice-President of the Capital School District Board of Education; Mr. Carl Krienen, Architect, ABHA Architects; and Mr. Gregg Moore, Civil Architect, Becker Morgan Group. Dr. Thomas concurred with Mrs. Townshend's account of the issues at the new Dover High School, noting that the District shared the concerns regarding safety and reiterating that the traffic would not be limited to the opening and closing hours of the school due to the many activities surrounding the facility. Dr. Thomas stated that the traffic has concerned the architects since the planning process for the project began. He noted that these issues had been a focal point during discussions with DelDOT and that the traffic signal was needed at the east entrance for safety.

Responding to Mr. Hutchison regarding the necessity for two (2) signals, Dr. Thomas expressed his belief that both signals were needed. Since most of the walking traffic would be from the east side of the school, he felt that most students would cross at the closest point (the east entrance). In addition, Dr. Thomas advised members that the main baseball/softball complex was located behind the east entrance; therefore, beginning in the spring, traffic at the end of the school day until after dark would significantly increase annually.

Mr. Moore reviewed a map of the New Dover High School site ***(Attachment #1)***, noting that the road at the west entrance was paid for by the Capital School District and was designed and installed to meet DelDOT's standards for becoming a future thruway to Hazlettville Road. He explained that the majority of the buses from the City would be using the east entrance and that a light was needed there to protect buses entering the school due to their slower speeds, larger size, and the oncoming traffic from the west, as well as for the children crossing the road. Mr. Moore stated that the buses themselves were not enough traffic to dictate a traffic signal through the warrant analysis process; however, consultants to the district made it clear that a signal was warranted from a safety perspective.

Responding to Mr. Hutchison, Dr. Thomas stated that he could provide an informed estimate of the volume of foot traffic anticipated based on the number of students within the school's radius who are not eligible for transportation. Mr. Hutchison felt it was important that the City and School District join forces to develop data regarding foot and vehicle traffic patterns to reinforce the need for a traffic signal for submission to DelDOT.

Mr. Davis recalled that the original plan included the light at the east entrance with a plan to also request a light at the west entrance. Responding, Mrs. Townshend explained that the decision to signalize the east entrance (as opposed to the west entrance) was due to: 1) the fact that the west entrance is a public street that will serve the apartment complex planned for construction west of the school and will connect to Tribbett Street and possibly to Hazlettville Road; and 2) the safety concern presented by the curve of Dover High Drive (the primary vehicle access entrance) as it intersects with Route 8.

Concurring with Mrs. Townshend, Mr. Moore explained that the western intersection was designed jointly with Leander Lakes (a 240-unit apartment complex to be constructed west of the school site), which allowed the warrant analysis to be met easily due to the combination of expected traffic

between the complex and the entrance to the high school. He noted that the traffic pattern was designed to segregate bus traffic (at the east entrance) from the student, teacher, and public traffic at the west entrance. He expressed his opinion that it made sense for an additional traffic light to be installed at the east entrance to allow buses to make a left turn (from the east) into the school uninterrupted; because a striped crosswalk was needed at that location for walkers, which DelDOT would not permit without a signal; and because a "T" intersection with significant traffic would be created with Heatherfield Way.

Responding to Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Moore indicated that the property's designation as a school would not affect the warrant analysis. He noted that standards do not change based on the type of facility, even if that facility is a school.

In response to Mr. Martino, Mr. Moore indicated that the amount of through traffic on Route 8 was not sufficient to change the outcome of the analysis and that this problem had been anticipated prior to the traffic study.

Mr. Hutchison suggested that numbers provided by Dr. Thomas, including the volume of walkers, etc., coupled with the letters from the officials and school board members, district and the City of Dover may cause DelDOT to reconsider the traffic signal for safety reasons. He felt that the fact that the facility is a school should weigh into the analysis and that the entrance should not be treated as a typical intersection.

Responding to Mr. Davis, Mrs. Townshend stated that she was not aware of any appeal process available through DelDOT.

In response to Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, Mr. Moore stated that he was unaware of any factors that would change the warrant analysis in the future, other than collisions at the location.

Responding to Mr. Perza regarding access to the school for walkers, Mr. Moore explained that 7,000 feet of sidewalks and bike paths into all aspects of the school were included in the design. He felt that DelDOT would not put a crosswalk on Route 8 unless there were a traffic light; therefore, the only designated crossing areas would be intersection near WaWa and Mifflin Road and at the west entrance of the school.

Mrs. Townshend reminded members that there would not be a continuous sidewalk on the south side of Route 8.

Mr. Perza suggested that information be gathered regarding the number of students whose safety is at risk and the distance they must travel to cross safely to establish a need for a traffic signal.

Mr. Davis suggested that the representatives a the State legislature also become involved and suggested reintroducing the concept of a pedestrian bridge.

Mr. Hutchison suggested conducting open dialogue and gathering information, including the total number of people going in and out of the school, as well as the total number of students walking and

driving. He felt that the Police Chief could contribute additional information pertaining to traffic patterns, accidents, and safety information and that all of this information should be compiled, perhaps including input from State officials, and presented to DelDOT with a request for further review and consideration of the traffic signal at the east entrance of the facility.

Mrs. Townshend noted that assistance had not yet been requested from legislators; however, Senator Bushweller and Representative Scott had been advised that this was an ongoing issue and that she would keep them informed in the event that their involvement was needed.

Dr. Thomas said that he had also had discussions with Senator Bushwell and Representative Scott. He noted that the Capital School District was attempting to exhaust every avenue to resolve the matter with DelDOT through the proper channels and would continue these efforts.

In response to Mr. Koenig, Mr. Moore stated that he was uncertain if the design of the intersection would have to be modified if a traffic signal were installed. Mr. Koenig noted that the Capital School District must apply for a construction permit for the entrance very soon since the signal design takes many months, which would make it increasingly difficult to have a signal installed in time for the school opening. Mrs. Townshend stated her understanding that, from a geometric standpoint, the intersection was to be designed so that if a signal was needed in the future it would not require a new design. Mr. Moore shared Mrs. Townshend's opinion; however, he stated that he could not be certain because the traffic lights are designed by DelDOT.

Mr. Les Blakemen, 209 Falmouth Way, stated that he lives across the street from the school site and expressed his concern with traffic. He noted that Heatherfield and Heatherfield East have turn lanes off Route 8; however, there is no turn lane entering Cranberry Run. Due to the lack of a turn lane, vehicles are required to slow down in the line of traffic to make a turn into the development, which he felt complicates traffic patterns, stating that drivers tend to cross over the solid white line on the shoulder to go around traffic. Mr. Blakeman explained that he currently has to wait for four (4) to five (5) minutes on some mornings before he is able to get out into traffic and he sees people taking risks because they have been waiting for so long. In response to Mr. Keller, Mr. Blakemen stated that this dangerous situation exists going both east and west and that adding buses and traffic will compound the situation. He noted that an additional problem exists at the intersection of Kenton Road and Route 8, where drivers turning left onto Kenton Road stop in the intersection when the left turn lane is full.

Mr. Moore indicated that the traffic light at the west entrance of the school should help to alleviate some of the inbound traffic; however, an additional light at the east end would also help because it would stop traffic from both directions.

Mr. Rich Vetter, Executive Director, Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) inquired if a pedestrian-activated signal had been considered, which would be in use only when pedestrians are present. Responding, Mr. Hutchison requested Mrs. Dawn Melson-Williams to determine if this option had been considered.

Mr. Davis moved to request staff to gather information from the Capital School District, including the number of people going in and out of the school and the total number of students walking and driving, as well as information from the Police Chief pertaining to traffic patterns, accidents, and safety information, and that this information be compiled, perhaps including input from State officials, and presented to the Delaware Department of Transportation with a request for further review and consideration of a traffic signal at the east entrance of the New Dover High School. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keller and unanimously carried.

Request for Waiver of Appendix A - Subdivisions, Article VI - Subdivision - General Requirements and Design Standards, Section E - Lots (5) - Requirement for Lot Frontage on a Public Street - 1151-1155 Walker Road, LLC (SB-13-01)

Ms. Dawn Melson-Williams, Principal Planner, reviewed a Petition to Waive Subdivision Standards to allow the creation of a lot without public street frontage for property located at 1151-1155 Walker Road, on the north side of Walker Road, west of Saulsbury Road, owned by 1151-1155 Walker Road, LLC. Mrs. Melson-Williams explained that the Minor Subdivision Plan proposed to create two (2) parcels consisting of 0.6594 acres (Lot 1) and 1.1196 acres (Lot 2) from the existing parcel of land consisting of 1.779 acres. The subject parcel is zoned IO (Institutional and Office Zone). The proposed subdivision of Lot 2 in the rear of the property would result in a lot without frontage on a public street.

Ms. Melson-Williams advised members that, in accordance with Appendix A - Subdivisions, Article VI - General Requirements and Design Standards, Section E - Lots, Item 5 requires that "All lots in a subdivision shall have frontage on a public street" and, per Appendix B - Zoning, Article 8 - Enforcement and Penalties, Section 1 - Building Permits, Section 1.1 states that a building permit cannot be issued for the construction or alteration of any building upon a lot without frontage upon, or legal permanent access to, a public street. She stated that the applicant had requested a waiver under the provisions of Appendix A - Subdivisions, Article VII - Special Provisions, A - Variance and Waiver and that a cross-access easement was proposed to provide permanent access to Lot 2 from Walker Road.

Staff recommended approval of the request to waive the requirement to provide lot frontage on a public street for Lot 2. Staff found that, due to the location of the existing buildings and the existing layout of the property, in order to achieve the required lot frontage on Walker Road (the public street) an irregular shaped lot would have to be created and would require variances for setbacks. This proposal would simplify the parcel shapes and present a series of proposed easements for access, utilities, parking and shared stormwater management facilities between the two (2) lots.

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the request for a waiver of lot frontage on a public street for Minor Subdivision Plan SB-13-01, Lands of 1151-1155 Walker Road, LLC.

Responding to Mr. Perza, Ms. Melson-Williams confirmed that a maintenance agreement pertaining to the easements had been established.

Mr. Terry Jaywork, representing the Dover Interfaith Mission for Housing, stated that there would

be a large reduction in the number of vehicles at the property when the rear building (currently designated for office space) becomes transitional housing.

Mr. Keller moved to recommend approval of the request for a waiver of the lot frontage requirement on a public street for Minor Subdivision Plan SB-13-01, Lands of 1151-1155 Walker Road, LLC, seconded by Mr. Dixon and unanimously carried.

Briefing on Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) Projects

Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, provided on update on Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) Projects, as follows:

DelDOT Repaving Project

Mr. Koenig indicated that the DelDOT repaving project, including the repaving of Loockerman Street and portions of Governors Avenue through the City, was delayed in the fall mainly because of the impact on the downtown merchants on Loockerman Street. The project was expected to resume in the March/April timeframe.

West Dover Connector

Mr. Koenig advised members that DelDOT indicated that their Right-of-Way Section was in the process of actively acquiring the necessary real estate to build the West Dover Connector, and it was believed that this would take until mid to late 2014. The design team was working on design and engineering documents, which they believed would be completed in late 2013, to facilitate the final review, and construction was scheduled to take place after this. According to DelDOT, the project had been fully funded for construction and it was hoped that construction would begin coming out of 2014.

Route 8/Hazlettville Road Connector

Mr. Koenig stated that DelDOT indicated that the preliminary engineering for the Route 8/Hazlettville Road Connector had been postponed until FY2017 and final engineering and construction would not take place for several years after that.

Briefing on Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Projects - *Rich Vetter*

Mr. Rich Vetter, Executive Director, Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) reviewed a map entitled "City of Dover West Street Bike/Pedestrian Improvements" and advised members of the goal was to fill in some of the gaps in sidewalks and bike paths for pedestrians and bikers. He explained that interest was expressed in extending the bike trail that runs from Schutte Park past the Eden Hill Medical Center to run along West Street to the Dover Transit Center with a 10-foot wide shared use sidewalk (areas depicted in red). Mr. Vetter stated that this project was in the conceptual planning stage and Century Engineering was preparing a cost estimate.

In response to Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Vetter advised that the project was still in the planning stage; however, he felt that it could be accomplished through the Transportation Enhancements Program, which currently had some funding. He indicated there was no target date for the project at this time.

Mr. Vetter reviewed a map entitled "West StreetTraffic Study," noting that discussions were beginning regarding the conversion of West Street to a one-way, south-bound street, which was an idea that had been presented in connection with the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Vetter indicated that a traffic analysis would be performed by a consultant to see if the concept made sense.

Responding to Mr. Hutchison's inquiry regarding subsequent steps in the process, Mr. Vetter advised that there would be many steps involved, including receiving input from DelDOT, the City, the public, and business owners and he noted that the West Dover Connector may also impact traffic in the area.

Update on the Creation of Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee

Mr. Hutchison advised members that a Workshop was held on January 22, 2013 regarding the establishment of a Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee and a tremendous amount of interest was expressed. Mr. Hutchison stated that, based on the large turnout, he felt that a committee of seven (7) would be appropriate, rather than five (5) members as initially proposed. He indicated that after all of the information is gathered from attendees at the meeting, a subcommittee would be selected for members to approve.

Ms. Greta Whittendale, Hartly, Delaware, indicated that she was in attendance at the Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee meeting and was concerned that many of the attendees had a vested interest in spending the funds that would be made available for promoting their own private enterprises, such as bicycle shops. It was her understanding that less than 2% of the attendees were actual bicyclists. Ms. Whittendale expressed her hope that the subcommittee would be comprised of residents throughout Kent County, since County residents use City streets. In response, Mr. Hutchison noted that the Committee will be diverse and include walkers and cyclists, as well as those concerned with safety interests.

Mr. Davis moved for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Keller and unanimously carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

James L. Hutchison
Chairman

JLH/JS/mk/dd/tm
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Attachment
Attachment #1 - Map - New Dover High School Site



Capital School District

The New DOVER HIGH SCHOOL

Dover, Delaware | January, 2013

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BECKER MORGAN GROUP
ARCHITECTURE
ENGINEERING

ABHA architects

ATTACHMENT #1
SA&T Committee Meeting of 01/30/2013